

the merest trace of white on the throat : it is, however, too light in general colour to be placed under *M. a. pekinensis*; so that until more material is available from south-west Africa, I leave it for the present in the position Hartert has put it, *cf.* Vög. paläarkt. Fauna, 1912, p. 839.

MICROPUS BARBATUS.

Cypselus barbatus Selater, P. Z. S. 1865, p. 599 : South Africa, *ex* Temm.

Rather darker than *M. a. apus*, with distinct black stripes on the throat and having a somewhat larger and broader bill.

A resident in South Africa. Wing in three males 180–173 mm., one female 182 mm. ; three specimens not sexed have the wing 186–176 mm.

[To be continued.]

XIV.—*The “Mauritius Hen” of Peter Mundy.*

By W. L. SCLATER, M.A., M.B.O.U.

THERE has recently been published by the Hakluyt Society and edited by Lt.-Col. Sir Richard C. Temple, Bt., Peter Mundy's account of his travels in Europe and Asia in the early part of the seventeenth century.

Peter Mundy was born about the year 1596 at Penryn in Cornwall, and in addition to his travels in Europe as far as Constantinople and Archangel, he made three voyages to the east, the first to India in the East India Company's service in 1628–1634, the second with Sir Wm. Courten's fleet to India and Japan in 1635–1638, and the third to India in 1655–1656. He is supposed to have died about 1667 at his native town of Penryn.

The account of his travels, very carefully prepared by himself, has remained up till now in MSS. and unpublished in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, while there is a second less complete copy in the British Museum.

The second volume recently published by the Hakluyt Society contains an account of Mundy's first voyage to

India, and proves to us that he was one of the most observant and truthful of all the older travellers. Like Herodotus, he always carefully distinguishes between the things that he himself has seen and those which he has only got on hearsay.

On his return voyage in March 1633/4 he passed the Island of Mauritius without calling there, but in 1638, when homeward-bound from China, he called at the island and wrote a glowing account of the scenery, salubrity, and natural productions.

As regards the birds the following is an extract from the MSS., for the use of which I am indebted to Sir Richard Temple and to Miss L. M. Anstey, who is assisting Sir Richard in the transcription of the original. The account of this voyage will form vol. iii. of the whole work and will be published shortly.

“For Fowl, these following among the rest.

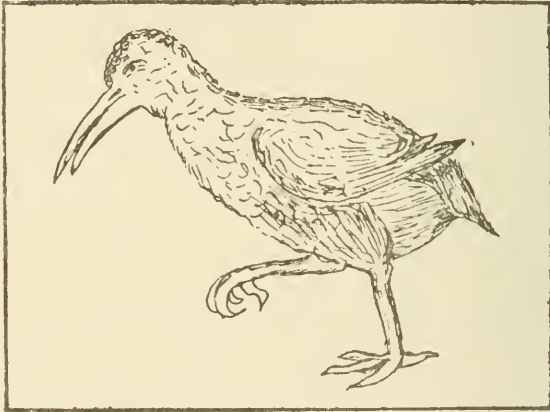
“The Dodo, although we now met with none, yet divers times they are found here, having seen at Surat brought from hence, and as I remember they are as big bodied as great Turkeys covered with down, having little hanging wings like short sleeves, although are unuseful to fly withal, or any way with them to help themselves. Whether [? Neither] can they swim, but as other land fowl do, on necessity into the water, being Cloven footed as they are.

“A Mauritius Hen as [? is a] fowl as big as our English hens of a yellowish Wheaten Colour, of which we got only one. It hath a big, long, crooked, sharp, pointed bill, feathered all over, but on their wings they are so few and small that they cannot with them raise themselves from the Ground. There is a pretty way of taking them with a red cap but this * was struck with a stick. They be very good meat and are also cloven footed so that they can neither fly nor swim more than the former. Of these two sorts of fowl aforementioned, for ought we yet know, not any to be found out of this Island which lieth about 100 Leagues

* Mundy is apparently referring to his illustration of this bird.

from St. Lawrence. A Question may be demanded how they should be here and not elsewhere, being so far from other land and can neither fly nor swim, whether by mixture of kind producing strange and monstrous forms, or the nature of the climate, air and earth in altering the first shapes in long time, or how?

Text-figure 5.



Peter Mundy's "Mauritius Hen," copied from the original drawing.

"Other land fowl here of divers sorts, as russet Parrots, large turtle Doves, and many other various in form, colour and bigness; among the rest one as great as a blackbird with a yellow Bill, and a little Bird like a Linnet, with others who would come flocking about us, as wondring at us, so that we struck them down with Sticks in our hands."

Of the Dodo much has been written and published. It probably became extinct about 1680. With regard to the "Mauritius Hen," of which Mundy gives an outline drawing (here reproduced), there can be no doubt that it is the now extinct bird known as *Aphanapteryx broekii* (Schl.).

But little is known of this bird through contemporary writers. It was first mentioned by Sir Thomas Herbert (1606-1682) who travelled to the east in the suite of Sir Dodmore Cotton, accredited Ambassador to the King

of Persia, and who visited Mauritius on his return journey. In his work “A relation of some yeares travaile, begunne Anno 1626, etc. etc.,” published in London in 1634, on p. 214 is a little picture of “A Dodo, A Hen and A Cacato,” but nothing further is said of the bird. Pieter van den Broecke, a Dutch traveller, also figured the bird but gave no description. On this figure Schlegel founded the specific name.

A Frenchman, François Cauche of Rouen, who made a journey to Madagascar in 1638, gives the following account (taken from an English translation of his travels published in 1710):—“In Prince Maurice’s Island . . . as also Red Hens with Woodcock’s beakes to take the which they need only to show them a piece of red cloth and they will follow and suffer themselves to be taken by hand. They are as big as our hens and excellent eating.”

In 1868 Georg Ritter von Frauenfeld published a reproduction of two pictures on vellum of the Dodo and of the Red Hen. These and other pictures of ornithological subjects were found in the private cabinet of the Emperor of Austria, and were supposed to have been painted for the Emperor Francis I. by the Dutch artist Hoefnagel about 1626. This picture agrees very well with Mundy’s description and figure, though the neck is rather longer and more slender.

Some bones obtained from the “Mare aux Songes” in Mauritius about 1868 by Mr. George Clark were examined and described by Milne-Edwards (Ann. Sci. Nat. (5) x. 1868, p. 325). He identified these with the “Mauritius Hen” and placed the bird among the Rails near *Ocydromus*, under the name of *Aphanapteryx broekii* (Schl.). He also gives a very complete account of all that was known about the bird from contemporary travellers and writers.

A further collection of bones from the same locality made by Mr. Théodore Sauzier in 1889 enabled Sir Edward Newton and Dr. Gadow (Trans. Zool. Soc. xiii. 1893, p. 281, pls. xxxiii.—xxxvii.) to add to our knowledge of the osteology of this interesting extinct Rail.